Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 06581 01 OF 02 140810Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 SSM-03 SES-02
SAA-01 OMB-01 /094 W
----------005734 141009Z /12
P R 140513Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3278
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBAASSY DAMAXCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JIDDA 6581

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, XF
SUBJECT: QUESTIONS ON PALESTINIAN POPULATION CONCENTRATIONS
LOCATED IN MIDDDLE EAST COUNTRIES

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PAGE 02 JIDDA 06581 01 OF 02 140810Z

REF: STATE 218639

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS SENT IN REPLY TO
REFTEL. WE BELEIVE THAT THE INFORMATION IS
ESSENTIALLY CORRECT BUT MAY BE SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT
OR FURTHER CLARIFICATION WHEN MORE TIME IS AVAIL-
ABLE TO RESEARCH THE MATTER FULLLY. THERE ARE NO

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

OFFICIAL STATISTICS AVAILABLE FROM WHICH PRECISE
DATA CAN BE OBTAINED. THE SOURCE OF MOST OF THE
INFORMATION HEREIN HAS BEEN GLEANED FROM RESIDENT
PALESTINIANS WITH WHOM THE REPORTING OFFICER IS
ACQUAINTED:
A. TOTAL POPULATION IS ABOUT
120,000 INCLUDING THOSE CARRYING JORDANIAN PASSPORTS
BUT ARE RESIDENTS OF WEST BANK. THERE ARE RELATIVELY
FEW PALESTIANIANS HERE FROM THE VARIOUS REFUGGEE CAMPS.
ACCORDING TO LOCAL PALESTIANIAN SOURCES, THESE HAVE
PROLBEMS IN GETTING SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDS FOR
PASSAGE. MOST PALESTINIANS ARE IN THE 25-40 YEAR OLD
RANGE. ALMOST 100 PERCENT OF PALESTINIANS MALES OF WORKING
AGE ARE EMPLOYED.

B. THE LARGEST NUMBER ARE EMPLOYED AS SCHOOL
TEACHERS BUT PRECISE FIGURES ARE NOT KNOWN. THE
SECOND LARGEST NUMBER ARE WHITE COLLAR WORKERS IN
BANKS, BUSINESS FIRMS AND SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICES.
LONG RESIDENT PALESTINIANS HERE ESTIMATE THAT THERE
ARE SOME 20,000 SO EMPLOYED. THE REST CON-
STRUCTION AND TECHNICAL WORKEERS - WELL DRILLING,
PERSONNEL, MECHANICS, ELECTRICIANS, ETC. THE AVERAGE
LENGTH OF STAY IN THE COUNTRY FOR PALESTINIANS
DIFFERS ACCORDING TO WORK CATEGORY, MANUAL WORKERS
STAY ABOUT 2 YEARS, WHITE COLLAR WORKERS 4 TO 6
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YEARS AND MANAGEMENT LEVEL EMPLOYEES STAY FOR LONGER
PERIODS, SOME UP TO 10 YEARS. MANY PALESTINIANS IN
THIS CATEGORY WHO HAVE PROVEN THEIR POLITICAL
MODERATION HAVE BEEN HERE 24 YEARS. SOME HAVE BEEN
GRANTED SAUI CITIZENSHIP. OTHERS ARE MARRIED TO
SAUDI WOMEN AND HAVE RESIDENCE PERMITS AND CITIZENSHIP
FACILITIES ON THIS BASIS.
THE AVERAGE EARNINGS OF PALESTINIAN WHITE COLLAR
WORKERS IS ONLY JUST BELOW THAT OF US AND BRITISH
NATIONALS. THEY ARE THE HIGHEST PAID OF THE ARAB AND
EASTERN EXPATRIATES. NINETY PERCENT ARE MUSLIM. THE
AVERAGE PAY FOR SKILLED WORKER IS SR 8000 PER MONTH.
MANAGEMENT EMPLOYYES CAN EARN UP TO SR 14,0000 PER MONTH
AS MANY DO. TEACHERS, WHO GET MORE AMENITIES SUCH
AS TRANSPORT, HOUSING, MEDICAL CARE, ETC. EARN LEAST
OF THE PROFESSIONAL GROUPS IN TAKE HOME PAY. ABOUT
SR 2500 PER MONTH IS THE AVERAGE FOR A LABORER.
PALESTINIANS ARE THRIFTY AND SAVE THEIR EARNINGS,
MOSTLY WITH THE ARAB BANK IN AMMAN. PRIOR TO
ADVERSE DEVELOPEMTNS IN LEBANON, MANY SENT SAVINGS
TO BEIRUT. THERE IS RELATIVELY LITTLE PALESTINIAN
INVESTMENT HERE. MOST OF THIS IS IN JOINT

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

VENTURES WITH SAUDIS. RESTAURANTS AND MAINTENANCE
COMPANIES, AUTO REPAIR SHOPS ARE SAMPLES OF
PALESTINIAN INVESTMENT. THE BEST AUTO REPAIR SHOP
IN JIDDA IS OWNED AND STAFFED BY PALESTINIANS.

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 06581 02 OF 02 140952Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 JIDDA 6581

C. SINCE 1973 THE FLOW OF PALESTINIANS HAS
REPORTEDLY INCREASED. PALESTINIAN WOMEN TEACHER AND
NURSES APPEAR TO HAVE MADE THE LARGEST NUMERICAL
GAINS FOLLOWED BY WHITE COLLAR WORKERS, MEDICAL
PERSONNEL AND SKILLED LABORERS.
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D. THERE ARE NO SPECIFICALLY ENUNCIATED LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON PALESTINIANS BUT THE SAUDIS PROBABLY WATCH THIS GROUP CLOSER THAN ALL OTHERS FOR SIGNS OF POLITICAL TROUBLE MAKING. ARAMCO DOES NOT ALLOW PALESTINIANS ENTRY TO THE RAS TANURA REFINERY COMPLEX AND FOR THAT MATTER ALL OTHER ARABS EXCEPT LEBANESE. THERE ARE NO SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS FOR MUSLIM PALESTINIANS. CHRISTIAN PALESTINIANS CANNOT VISIBLY PRACTICE THEIR FAITH BUT HIS APPLIES TO OTHER CHRISTIAN NATIONALS AS WELL. CHILDREN OF ALL FOREIGNERS BORN IN SAUDI ARABIA DO NOT ACQUIRE SAUDI CITIZENSHIP AS A RESULT. THIS HOLDS AS WELL FOR PALESTINIANS. CITIZENSHIP TO ANY FOREIGNER, WHO MUST BE A MUSLIM, IS ONLY GRANTED BY THE KING. PALESTINIAN BORN HERE TAKE THE CITIZENSHIP OF THE MALE PARENT.

E. SAUDI GOVERNMENT POLICIES AT THE PRESENT TIME ARE NOT A THREAT TO PALESTINIANS LEGALLY EMPLOYEED HERE. THE KINGDOM'S MANPOWER NEEDS INDICATE THAT MORE WORKERS, INCLUDING PALESTINIANS, WILL BE NEEDED OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

F. SAUDIS HAVE NO HANG-UPS RE PALESTINIANS WORKERS PARTICULARLY. THEY VIEW ALL NON-NATIONALS AS TEMPORARY RESIDENT WORKERS WHO HAVE ARRIVED HERE ONLY FOR THE HIGH WAGES. HOWEVER, SAUDIS DO NOT HTEMSELVES RELISH THE MENIAL, LABOR AND ROUTINE WHITE COLLAR WORK NOW PERFORMED BY FOREIGNERS.

G. ALL FOREIGNERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO SAUDIS INCLUDING
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DOMESTIC UNIVERSITY TRAINING. THEY DO NOT, HOWEVER, GET SAUDI SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDY ABROAD AS DO SAUDIS. THERE ARE NO EDUCATIONAL QUOTAS HERE FOR SAUDIS. NO INFO IS AVAILABLE ON PALESTINIANS ATTENDING SCHOOLS ABROAD.

H. THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT TRIES TO RESTRICT ENTRY TO PALESTINIANS WHO ARE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE AS MODERATES AND PRO-RIGHT. KNOWN LEFTISTS ARE NOT PERMITTED ENTY TO THE KINGDOM. THE OUTLOOK FOR

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

PALESTINIAN WORKERS OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS IS GOOD, GIVEN THE FACT OF SAUDI ARABIAS ENORMOUS DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PAUCITY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS.

I. HIGH PAY, LANGUAGE FAMILIARITY AND IN MOST CASES RELIGIOUS SIMILARITY ARE INCENTIVES FOR PALESTINIANS TO WORK IN SAUDI ARABIA. DISINCENTIVES FOR LIBERAL MINDED, PROGRESSIVE AND MODERNIZED PALESTINIANS INCLUDE LACK OF ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, PROHIBITION AGAINST ALL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND THE SUPERIOR ATTITUDE OF MANY SAUDIS. HIGH COST OF CONSUMER GOODS IS ALSO A PERIPHERAL DISINCENTIVE.

J. HOUSING. THERE ARE NO PALESTINIAN REFUGEE OR OTHER CAMPS IN SAUDI ARABIA. PALESTINIANS ARE MOSTLY CONCENTRATED IN URBAN CENTERS.

K. THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF MOST PALESTINIANS AND THIER HIGHTER LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND ABILITY WORKS AGAINST ASSIMILATION INTO AN ESSENTIALLY BEDOUIN SOCIETY. ALTHOUGH ARABS, THEY ARE, AND CONSIDER THEMSELVES, DIFFERENT. MANY PALESTINIAN PROFESSIONALS, HOWEVER, SUCH AS LAWYERS AND DOCTORS, WHO HAVE RESIDED HERE FOR LONG PERIODS, SINGULARLY MUSLIM, HAVE ASSIMILATED WELL AND ARE PART OF THE UPPER STRATAS OF SOCIETY. MANY HAVE BEEN GRANTED SAUDI CITIZENSHIP.
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